SLAVERY

NOT A

SCRIPTURAL GROUND OF DIVISION

IN EFFORTS FOR THE

SALVATION OF THE HEATHEN.

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INTRODUCTION.

Some of my friends at a distance have sent me by mail two copies of Doctor Lafon's Address, delivered last September at Brooklyn, entitled "The great obstruction to the conversion of souls at home and abroad." I have read the Address repeatedly with attention, and, as I hope, with candor. An introductory note informs us, that Doctor Lafon was once a slaveholder: that after his conversion he emancipated his slaves, and subsequently became one of the missionaries of the A. B. C. F. M., in the Sandwich Islands; where he remained five years and a half, and then disconnected himself from the Board, among other reasons, because of their receiving the wages of slave-labor, "without reproof or rebuke."

In the conversion of Doctor Lafon I rejoice, also in that view he took of slavery which led him to emancipate his slaves. The view which I have taken of the subject, would, I think, have prompted me to do the same; and I should be gratified to have all others take the same view of the matter. Nor do I wish to impugn Doctor Lafon's motives in disconnecting himself from the American Board—still I think it is to be regretted that he has done so. We seemed to have a sufficient number of separate missionary organizations, without making this the cause of a new one. Our denominational divisions are exceedingly calculated to perplex and retard our missionary operations. It seems a great pity that Christians should appear before the heathen world as if they were a house divided against itself. If it is undesirable that we should be split into pieces by denominational differences, is it not still more undesirable that each denomination should be sub-divided into several distinct or-

ganizations in collision one with the other? Though we may at home form ourselves into various societies under different names, such as Anti-Slavery, Colonization, &c., is it expedient that we should appear before the heathen world, distinguished not only as Presbyterian, Baptist, and Methodist Missionary Societies; but also as Anti-slavery, or Colonization, Presbyterian, Baptist, and Methodist Missionary Societies? If this new division in the missionary ranks, especially among the friends of the American Board, which Dr. L. and those who unite with him are producing, be not necessary to answer a good conscience, enlightened by the word of God, it seems a great pity that it should be fostered. For one Board can doubtless do the work at less expense than two; and I should think they could do it in a better manner. This would also prevent that collision of agents and missionaries, to which the divisive system exposes us.

Whether uniformity of sentiment on the subject of slavery be a pre-requisite to a union in the missionary enterprise, must be determined by consulting the word of God. Has God spoken on this subject? If he has, let us sit down at his feet and hear his word: for God is wiser than man. And let us not indulge the thought that our love to the cause of missions, or to the cause of humanity, exceeds the love of God himself.

The church has entered on the great work of evangelizing the nations, without having incorporated her sentiments on the subject of slavery into the constitutions of her missionary organizations. In so doing, I would ask, has she transgressed a divine rule? Has she left out an article which she was under obligation to insert? And is it her duty here to make a pause for the purpose of inserting such an article? Doctor Lafon seems to think it is. His sentiments on the subject he has placed before us, and they claim our respectful attention. But he cannot wish us to adopt his sentiments until we have examined them; nor then, unless they shall be found to agree with the word of God.

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Doctor Lafon makes the great obstruction to the conversion of souls at home and abroad, to consist in two kinds of heathenism: first, the heathenism of *idolatry*, and secondly, the heathenism of *oppression*. It appears to be the more special design of his Address, to show us how great an obstruction the heathenism of oppression is. He refers us to the inhabitants of the Sandwich Islands and to the slave population of the United States, for the purpose of showing what a mighty hindrance oppression is to the conversion of souls. We unite with Doctor L. in deploring the existence of this kind of heathenism, and are ready to concede that it is a great obstruction to the conversion of souls at home and abroad. But it is a question of supreme importance, what is the divinely prescribed way to be taken by the Church and her missionary associations, for the removal of this species of heathenism? Is it the will of Him, whose we are and whom we serve, that we should make the same direct attack upon it, as upon the heathenism of idolatry?

What shall the missionaries of the cross do with oppression when it is *national*? when the whole community is in a state of civil bondage? Shall they appear before them first in the character of politicians, for the purpose of removing the heathenism of oppression; and when this is removed, shall they then begin to preach against the heathenism of

idolatry? Or shall they preach against both at once? Is either of these the prescribed way to convert the Gentile nations? When Christ commanded his Apostles to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, did they understand their commission to lay them under the obligation to preach against the heathenism of oppression as much as against that of idolatry? Certainly they could not have inferred such an obligation from the example of their Master. Though Christ did not himself become a missionary to the heathen, yet he lived under a heathen prince whose government was despotic; and his enemies strove hard to ensnare him, by inducing him to declare it to be unlawful to pay tribute to that despot. But without drawing out any opinion of his concerning the character of the emperor or his government, they were told to "render to Cæsar the things which were Cæsar's, and unto God the things which were God's." I think there is no evidence that the Apostles, when they went forth at the command of Christ to disciple the nations, preached against the heathenism of oppression, as they did against that of idolatry. When their persecutors, in punishing them, contravened the laws of the country, they made their complaints; but in their complaints, they said nothing against the laws themselves. They enjoined it on all their converts to obey magistrates—to be subject to the existing powers—to submit themselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake; whether to the king as supreme, or to governors as sent by him.

And how has the heathenism of oppression been met by the most pious and devoted missionaries of later times? Has it been with harangues in favor of liberty and against tyranny? Is this the course which has been taken by the missionaries at the Sandwich Islands? Or is this the course which they ought to have taken? Doctor L. acknowledges that they have already been instrumental in effecting a sensible melioration of the civil condition of the inhabitants. He says, "The government, from being an entire despotism, became a limited monarchy. A constitution was formed, setting forth the character the government should henceforward assume, and defining the limits of its several departments. Laws were made and published, the right of property was recognized, and a representative branch was added to the legislative department."

That the missionaries have been the cause, under God, of this betterment in the civil condition of the Sandwich Island-

ers can admit of no doubt. And it greatly concerns us to be made acquainted with the means by which they have brought it to pass. Doctor L. has had a better opportunity of knowing the means which have been used, than we who have tarried at home. But from the acquaintance I have with some of the missionaries, and from an attentive perusal of their published reports, I feel confident in saying, they have not effected this change in the civil government of the nation, by inveighing against the despotism of the king and his chiefs, or by delivering lectures on civil liberty. They did not visit these distant islands as political men, but as the ministers of Jesus. They, therefore, went to declare war with no prince, except the prince of the power of the air, the spirit which worketh in the hearts of the children of disobedience. They went where Satan's seat was, to assert the rights of Jehovah, and to preach a crucified Saviour as the only hope of a fallen race. This was their legitimate work as the servants of Him who declared that his kingdom was not of this world. Considered in the character of Christian ministers, their great object was not to produce literary or governmental improvements among these ignorant and oppressed people. They had a much higher object in view, even to make them know the only true God and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent. They who know these great truths, in a saving manner, shall be free indeed; while all the rest of the world, in a spiritual sense, are the subjects of the most cruel despot.

We do not mean to say that human science and civil liberty are of no value. We freely acknowledge that improvements in these are important, since they not only render this life more comfortable, but have a favorable bearing on the interests of the life to come. And I would now ask, had the knowledge of letters and improvement in civil government been proposed by the missionaries as the grand desideratum, could they have taken any other way, different from that which they did take, which would have answered the purpose so well? I am persuaded that every considerate man will acknowledge, they could have taken no other way to improve the condition of that degraded people, as it respects the present life, which would have been so speedy, so effectual, or so scriptural. Who can but admire the wisdom displayed in this divine arrangement — that the simple preaching of the gospel, unembarrassed with the politics of this world, should be made the readiest and

most effectual means of improving the condition of the civil community?

If we grant that a heathenism of oppression is spread over the pagan world, which is more in the way of the success of the gospel than the heathenism of idolatry, I do not perceive how this obliges us to change the structure of a missionary society, or alter the mode of our attack on this portion of Satan's dominion. In waging this holy war, we go against the enemy, wholly in the capacity of a spiritual host, clothed with spiritual armor, for the purpose of bringing them under a new and spiritual dominion, even the dominion of Zion's King. It is not the object of our mission to prejudice them against their temporal rulers, but to turn them from the power of Satan unto God.

If Doctor L. has reflected new light on the heathenizing influence of oppression, the light may be valuable; but I do not see that it discovers any new path for the missionary who is sent forth to the heathen. I can hardly suppose that he would wish the American Board to give their missionaries instructions on this subject, different from those which they have heretofore given them. The civil oppression, under which many of the heathen nations are groaning, may operate as one motive to hasten the work of evangelizing them. Whatever light Dr. L. has reflected on this matter should have its influence to speed us in our work, but not to change the manner of our doing it. I do not see, provided all which he has said concerning the influence of this kind of heathenism be admitted, that there is any new missionary organization called for, or any different mode of operation from that which has already been adopted. Would Doctor L. propose that, in order to meet the heathenism of oppression, every missionary society should place in its constitution, an article expressive of their abhorrence of an absolute monarchy, and their determination to suffer no professed converts to be admitted into their churches who did not sympathize with them in this matter? Such an article would exert no good influence on the mind of the missionary, nor would it afford him the least help in winning souls to Christ. But the effect it would have to hinder him in his work is very manifest. (1.) It would tend to secularize that which is spiritual: it would give an *earthly* complexion to the kingdom of *heaven*. (2.) It would render it difficult, if not impossible, for the missionary to get access to those of his fellow men who live under despotic governments.

To such his Master sends him as well as to others; and yet he puts no sword into his hand, by which to gain access to them, except the sword of the Spirit. (3.) The effect of such an article, in case the missionary were to be imbued with the spirit of it, would be to divide the attention of those to whom he is sent, between things as dissimilar as time and eternity, to divide their attention between the freedom of republicans and the freedom of Christians.

I can hardly deem it necessary to extend my remarks on this part of the subject; for I do not believe that Dr. L. or his friends would wish to have missionary societies prepare themselves, by explicit enactments, or a declaration of their opinions on governmental affairs, to attack the heathenism of oppression, when that oppression consists in the want of what is termed *civil* liberty, or the freedom of citizens. Let us now suppose that these benevolent societies are about to send their messengers of peace into a country where a portion of the inhabitants are in a state of *domestic* bondage, and where this bondage is sanctioned by law. Shall they prepare to encounter this evil by special enactments, expressive of their abhorrence of slavery, and of their determination not to tolerate its existence even for an hour? Is it the duty of the missionary to bear with *civil*, but not with *domestic* bondage? Does it require that the structure of the society which sends him should be different in the one case from what it is in the other? Is it true that, while the missionary is forbidden to disturb the relation which exists between sovereigns and their subjects, he is allowed to annul that which exists between masters and their servants?

If the Scripture has given us instruction on this subject; let us thankfully receive it; for all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be thoroughly furnished unto all good works. For our present purpose, we do not need to know what are the decisions of the Scripture concerning the character of the thing in question. To guide our missionary operations in countries where slavery prevails, we need to be informed on these two points: 1st. Did the Apostles and their associates preach in such countries? 2d. If they did, how did they treat the subject of slavery; and how were they required to treat it?

1st. Did the Apostles and their associates preach the gospel in countries where slavery prevailed? That they

did I think can be made perfectly certain, without referring to profane history or any writings but their own. I should suppose that no reader of the New Testament could entertain a doubt, that a servitude existed in the places where they preached, and to which they sent epistles, which was of a character fundamentally different from that of hired servants. Men distinguished by the epithets *bond* and *free* are repeatedly spoken of as having membership in the Apostolic churches. 1 Cor. xii. 13; Gal. iii. 28; Eph. vi. 8. In those primitive churches there were not only servants, but "servants who were under the yoke." 1 Tim. vi. 1. There were evidently servants who could not be made free at their own option. 1 Cor. vii. 21-22.

2d. If servitude of the involuntary kind existed in the days of the Apostles, and in the places where they labored in the gospel, we are next concerned to know how they treated it; especially as they received their commission and instructions from the highest source. I have attentively examined their epistles with this subject in view, and I cannot perceive that they allowed themselves to make any more direct attack on the bondage of the servant who was under the yoke of his master, than on the bondage of the subject who was under the yoke of his prince. I do not find that they taught servants to disregard the authority of their masters, on the ground of the injustice of slavery, any more than they taught subjects to disregard the authority of their sovereigns, on account of their unjust and tyrannical governments. So Paul taught the servants at Ephesus and at Colosse. And such teaching on this subject he strictly enjoined on Timothy and Titus, who were ministers of the word, and to each of whom he wrote an epistle. In the same strain was the preaching of the Apostle Peter. See Eph. vi. 5-8; Col. iii. 22-24; 1 Tim. vi. 1, 2; Tit. ii. 9; 1 Pet. ii. 18.

I do not adduce these passages to show that Paul and Peter and Timothy and Titus approved of the institution of slavery; or that the Author of the Scriptures approved of it. Nor did I, just now, bring forward the declaration which Christ made, when he was inquired of whether it was lawful to give tribute to Cæsar, to show that Christ approved of the despotism of that monarch: nor the injunction which Paul laid on all Christians to be subject to the existing power, as a proof that the Apostle had no objection to any of the forms of government which were then in the

world. My sole object in bringing forward these passages has been, to show how Christ and his Apostles and friends treated, and how they required others to treat, the governments of the earth, both national and domestic, even when they were manifestly of a despotic character.

Now, if such were the rules given to the church in primitive times to direct her efforts in spreading the gospel among the nations, and if she has been furnished with no inspired rules of a subsequent date, can she safely depart from these precedents? Had the American Board been organized for the express purpose of sending missionaries to the slaves of this country, it would have been unwise, and contrary to the inspired rule, to have put themselves in the attitude of belligerents against their masters. As they sent their missionaries to convert the Sandwich Islanders, who were under the heathenism of civil oppression, without inveighing against their rulers, just so it would behoove them, in sending their missionaries to those in domestic servitude, to forbear to inveigh against their masters. This, as it appears to me, would not only be according to "the pattern shown in the mount," but also in accordance with sound reason. If, in the capacity of teachers of religion, we were to claim it to be our duty wherever we go, among freemen and bondsmen, to denounce slavery as a grievous sin, it would render it impossible to approach the slave population of any country. But if such denunciations should not prevent our access to them, it would nevertheless be of a hurtful tendency to the slaves themselves. These men are involved in a bondage of two kinds; for the one they are innocent—for the other guilty; the one will, at the longest, end within a few years, but the other, if the chain be not broken soon, will remain through eternity. Freedom from domestic bondage may, in some cases, add very little to one's happiness; but freedom from "sin's old yoke and Satan's chain" brings the soul out of the lowest dungeon into God's marvellous light. The converted slave would not exchange conditions with an unconverted master, nor with an unconverted king on the throne. It was in view of this infinite privilege, which every convert enjoys, however mean his condition in this life, that Paul said in his letter to the church of Corinth, "Art thou called being a servant, care not for it." If you are a Christian, you are a king and priest unto God, and have an inheritance which will never fail.

Some may imagine that the heathenism of oppression bears so heavily on the slaves of this country, that there can be no hope of reaching them with the means of grace, until the yoke of bondage is thrown from their necks. I wish most sincerely that this heathenism were removed from our land, by the repeal of all the laws which sustain it. Were those States where such laws exist to annul them, I am persuaded that in so doing they would not only do an act of justice to their servants, but do themselves and their children an essential service. But the Church owes a present duty to this portion of our inhabitants. We have no right to wait for the repeal of the slave laws before we make an effort to preach the salvation of Christ to the enslaved. And while those laws remain, the gospel does not authorize us practically to abrogate them; or so to conduct as if we knew nothing of such a relationship as that of master and servant. But while we are required to recognize the relationship, we are also required to enforce the duties which grow out of it: the duties of the master, as well as of the servant. While we enjoin it upon the servants to obey in all things their masters according to the flesh, we are to say to the masters, "Give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven." We are to remind them that their servants are their fellow-men, whose interests they cannot disregard with impunity: that they have souls which will exist for ever—souls which need intellectual and moral cultivation. For it is an inspired proverb, "That if the soul be without knowledge, it is not good." Masters ought to know that their servants have a right, in common with themselves, to be made acquainted with the Bible. If they should tell us that the laws do not permit them to teach their servants to read, we must urge them to do what they can to counteract the ill effect of such laws, by taking opportunity themselves to read to their servants, and especially from the word of God. And, without arraying ourselves against the government, we may join with others in petitioning for the repeal of those laws which have such an unfavorable bearing on the immortal interests of so many of our fellow-probationers; those laws which preclude them from obeying the Saviour's command to *search the Scriptures*.

Now, if I am correct in the position which I have taken, namely, that our inspired instructions require us to preach a spiritual deliverance to the oppressed, whether their oppres-

sion consist in being under despotic kings or despotic masters, without absolving them from their allegiance in either case; then it would seem to me inappropriate for a missionary society to declare itself either anti-monarchical or anti-slavery. The members may be both anti-monarchical and anti-slavery in sentiment, and yet, if in the capacity of a society for the propagation of the gospel, they declare themselves to be so, they array an opposition to their good work of spreading the gospel which is not called for. They make an impression on the public mind, both at home and abroad, which the Scriptures do not authorize them to make; namely, that their work, as a Christian society, is as much to oppose earthly princes, as to oppose the prince of hell; and to deliver servants from their earthly bondage, as much as to deliver them from the bondage of sin.

I have little doubt, that Paul was, in heart, opposed both to slavery and absolute monarchy. But he too well understood his work as an Apostle of Christ, to make any direct attack on either. He entered into the spirit of that good confession which his Master made before Pontius Pilate, when he said, "My kingdom is not of this world." None, I conclude, will pretend that it was the spirit of cowardice which led Paul to tell Christian servants to obey their masters; and which led him to forbear to require Christian masters to release their servants. As an Apostle of Jesus Christ, employed in establishing a spiritual kingdom in the earth, he would have gone out of his way to have said anything more on the subject than to enjoin a faithful, conscientious performance of the duties of all the civil and domestic relations which existed among men. It was not surely a cowardly spirit, or that fear of man that bringeth a snare, which led Jesus Christ to say to one, who wished him to speak to his brother, that he would divide the inheritance with him, "Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?" Nor was it shameful fear which made him refuse to pass a decision on the case of the adulterous woman who was brought to him in the temple. John viii. 1, 11. He doubtless designed, by his treatment of these cases, to give a proper view of the spiritual character of his kingdom, and to let all understand that he could not be diverted from his appropriate work; nor needlessly bring himself into collision with the governments of this world.

Those brethren who are desirous that Missionary Boards should take action on the subject of slavery, may think it

is a cowardly spirit which prevents them from doing it. But why should they impute it to so base a motive. How do they know but these Missionary Boards are kept back from taking action on the subject from the same motives which influenced the Apostles, and the Redeemer himself? Were I a member of a Missionary Board, I should certainly be afraid of displeasing the head of the church, by clogging its operations with any such secular appendages. Anti-Slavery, Colonization, and other societies may have their proper sphere of useful operation, but why should they wish to embarrass the church in her appropriate work of extending the kingdom of Christ, by requiring her to identify herself with any one of them? Would it, I ask, have been consistent for some of the primitive ministers of the Gospel, together with private brethren, to have formed an organization for missionary labors which should have been distinct from that of the Apostles, for the sake of exhibiting more clearly their abhorrence of slavery? Could they have done such a thing in consistency with a full belief that the Apostles wrote to the churches as they were moved by the Holy Ghost? Had they believed, what I have expressed as my own belief, that Paul was in sentiment opposed to slavery, would it have become them to complain of the method in which he treated that subject in the letters he wrote to the churches, and in those which he wrote to his brethren in the ministry? Would it have been consistent with a spirit of humility and of reverence for the Scriptures had they stigmatized Paul as a time-server and a pro-slavery Apostle? What if they could not see why he was not explicit in opposing servitude, by giving the servants full liberty to escape from their masters; or by requiring the masters to take the servile yoke from their necks,—still, if they believed, as we do, that the Spirit of Christ guided him in writing those letters, they could not with any consistency have supposed that he had made a mistake in his manner of treating the subject.

If it would have been schismatic for some members of the church, at that period, to have formed a society for the propagation of the Gospel, to be governed in its missionary operations by rules repugnant to those laid down in the inspired writings; at what subsequent period, we would ask, did it become proper to disregard such rules, and substitute others in their stead? If a society formed in the days of the Apostles had made this a rule—that no master, having servants under his yoke, should be allowed the privilege

of becoming one of its members, or of contributing to its funds, would such a rule have been in accordance with the authorized practice of admitting such masters into their churches, and at the same time enjoining it on their servants, not to despise them because they were brethren, but rather to do them service because they were faithful and beloved partakers of the benefit? What should we have thought of Paul, had he incorporated such a rule in the same epistle which contained the above direction to servants? Between the two there would have been no agreement.

But is it not wrong, it may be said, to put the price of blood into the treasury of the Lord? And does not the Lord declare that he hates robbery for burnt-offerings? I would reply to this by asking, do the Scriptures justify us in stigmatizing every offering which is made by a master who has bond-servants, by calling it *robbery*, and *the price of blood?* By fixing such a stigma on his gift, merely because he is a master, we seem to manifest great disrespect for that part of Scripture which suffers masters to hold a place in the same church with their servants, and that "without reproof or rebuke." There might then have been masters on the earth, whom it would have been proper to class with robbers and murderers and other vile criminals; but I am sure that it could not have been proper to put them all into this class, at the very time when an inspired Apostle was greeting them as *brethren, faithful* and *beloved.*

Have the apostolic epistles lost their inspiration through age? Or have they ceased to furnish rules to regulate the church of Christ? If they have not, I should suppose we had no authority for any essential change in the mode of our aggressive movements against the kingdom of darkness.

I have no doubt that the church would be better prepared to extend the kingdom of Christ in the world, provided every Christian master were to release his bondsmen. Nor do I doubt that it is proper for such as have released theirs, to persuade their brethren to imitate their example. Other Christians have also a duty to perform towards their slave-holding brethren. They should urge them to let the golden rule have its full effect in the liberation of the oppressed. But in case we do not immediately succeed in bringing our brethren to adopt our views on this point, have we a right to turn upon them and call them murderers and man-stealers? Or is it right we should refuse their offerings to the house of our God? Will the Scriptures authorize us to tell them,

that to receive their offerings would be as criminal as to receive the winnings of the gambler, or the profits of the brothel?

The reader may wish to ask, whether I should judge it proper for a missionary society to receive a donation in *slaves:* and why this would not be as proper as to receive the avails of their labor. In my view the two cases are quite different. The difference is the same as between bearing with my brother who has slaves, and having them myself. The one I am required to do, but not the other. My bearing with my brother in this case, is no proof that I approve his practice; but the adoption of his practice as my own, is setting to it the seal of my approbation. A benevolent society, in receiving donations from the country at large, without excepting the slaveholders, manifests nothing more than that spirit of toleration, which I think the Scriptures inculcate; but were it to accept a proffered donation in slaves, this would constitute it a slaveholding society.

Were I to adopt the sentiment, which I believe has been adopted by some, namely, that every master who has a bond-servant is a graceless man, still, if this were the only way in which his graceless character was developed, I should not dare to exclude him from a place in the church of Christ. With this characteristic, however unlovely it may appear to me, Christ allowed him to come into his visible family, and gave him a place among his disciples. See Eph. vi. 9; Col. iv. 1; 1 Tim. vi. 1-3. Now, until a mandate shall come from the same high authority which gave him admittance, requiring him to be excluded, I dare not turn him out of the family. Should any one say, that since the time the master was admitted, there has been such an augmentation of light on this subject as to render the relationship he sustains no longer tolerable, it would not satisfy me that I have a right to consider the toleration act, which brought him into the church, as being henceforward null and void. As a master was he permitted to come into the church, and as such he was received. If he neglected to perform the duties of a master, he exposed himself to the censures of the church. But by what divine edict, I would ask, is he exposed to those censures now merely for being a master? I have a right to reason with him on the subject, and show him that I consider the act in his favor as mere toleration, like that which Moses gave to the Israelites because of the hardness of their hearts. I have a right

to entreat him not to avail himself of the toleration, but to cease forthwith from sustaining his present relation to his domestics. Nevertheless, in case he does not yield to my entreaties, have I a right to say to him, though you may be as pious and faithful a master as was Abraham himself, you can have no place with me in the family of Christ?

I wish it to be understood that it is not the design of any of the remarks I have made, to throw the least obstruction in the way of effecting an essential (though peaceable) change in the laws of civil society in relation to domestic servitude. I rejoice in all the laws which have been enacted, and efforts which have been made, to counteract the infamous slave trade. I rejoice in the abolition of slavery in one and another of the kingdoms of the old world, and the states of the new. As this is one of the institutions or appendages of the civil community, to this community it belongs either to modify or abrogate the laws which sustain it. When the state has abrogated her slave laws, no such laws, as a matter of course, can remain to disturb the peace of the church. The church did not enact these laws, but merely recognized their existence, and thereupon enforced the religious duties resulting from the relationship of master and servant. While these civil enactments remain, the church seems not to be authorized forcibly to repeal them, even in relation to her own members. She is doubtless at liberty to use moral means to persuade her members voluntarily to relinquish their legal right to hold their fellow men in bondage. But she has no right to enact laws, even for the regulation of her own discipline, which shall contravene those which have been given her by her King. What her King has declared He will tolerate, she has no right to say she will not tolerate. Where He allows her to use persuasion and nothing more, she has no right to use coercion.

Some of those who acknowledge the involuntary character of the servitude which the precepts of the New Testament required should be tolerated, are nevertheless of opinion that these precepts have no present application on account of a change of circumstances. But who has authority to pronounce circumstances sufficiently changed to annul divine rules? The rules referred to oblige no man to violate the dictates of conscience by retaining his bondsmen in their bondage, but in case his conscience suffers him to do it, these rules lay his brethren under obligation to bear with him in so doing. While increasing light may increase his

obligation to emancipate *his bondmen*, I do not know that it gives his brethren a right to compel him to do it. If God has once required us to bear with the master who has servants under his yoke, does not this requisition continue to be obligatory until He himself releases us from the obligation? "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant," and that in contrariety to the rules prescribed by his own master? As the servants of Christ we all have one Master. Where our Divine Master has prescribed rules for the regulation of our treatment of our fellow servants, what right have we to alter them, and offer this as our reason for doing it, that circumstances are sufficiently changed to justify the alteration?

An epitome of my reasons for dissenting from the new missionary arrangement, recommended in the Address which has drawn forth my remarks, I will now state in numerical order, that it may be seen at a glance why I am opposed to this innovation.

First. My first reason, and one which to me appears enough to decide the matter, is this; I think it to be *unscriptural.* That is, it seems to differ entirely from the directions of Scripture in relation to this very matter. Slavery existed among the nations to whom the gospel was sent while the pen of inspiration was still in the hands of the Apostles. Then, it is evident, the anti-slavery test was not required of the members of the church, to give them a right to send or carry the news of salvation to the heathen. Then was it expressly enjoined on the ministers of Christ that they should teach servants to be subject to their master. Nor were they authorized to require believing masters to give freedom to their servants. See 1 Tim. vi. 1-3; Tit. ii. 9; 1 Pet. ii. 18. These rules were not designed to hinder any master from giving freedom to his bond servants, but I do think they were designed to teach us that in our ecclesiastical capacity, or in our missionary associations, we are forbidden to agitate this question. That is, we are forbidden to make it a term of communion. We are forbidden to go forth, as propagators of the religion of Christ, in the appropriate character of an anti-slavery mission; just as much as in the appropriate character of an anti-monarchical mission. *A Christian mission is neither one nor the other.*

Secondly. The proposed change in our organizations has a direct tendency to embarrass missionary operations, and is, in my view, exceedingly calculated to hinder the

conversion of souls both at home and abroad. Though I agree with Dr. L. in believing that the heathenism of oppression is a great obstruction to the conversion of souls, still I believe it would present an additional obstruction to their conversion, were the church of the Redeemer to inscribe on her missionary standards, EXTERMINATING WAR WITH DESPOTISM AND SLAVERY. Nor does she, in withholding this inscription from her standards, act the part of deceit. It is but a fair representation of her exclusively spiritual character. But would not the church practise deceit, were she to assure the nations whom she seeks to Christianize, that she has no intention to intermeddle with their civil or domestic polity; and yet, as soon as she has effected their subjugation to the cross, insist on their changing their polity as the only condition of retaining their place in the household of faith. It is true that if, after embracing the religion which she sends them, they should become so changed in their views and feelings as to be induced, of their own accord, to change their civil or domestic government, or either of them, they can have no cause of complaint. But should they be constrained to effect the change, as the only condition of being permitted to retain their place in her communion, they will have occasion to say: 'The soldiers of the cross approached us under false colors. They assured us they would not interfere with our civil or domestic government. In accordance with this assurance they left on record for the instruction of their converts such precepts as these: "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king as supreme, or unto governors as unto them that are sent of him.—Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward." But now they tell our servants that they are under no obligation to be subject to us; and they tell us, if we do not relinquish all claim to their service they will drive us from their communion and deliver us to Satan.'

Thirdly. It is, in my view, a great objection against the proposed system that it is calculated to divide the missionary ranks; to divide the friends of Christ, the friends of the heathen, and even the friends of the slave; for it is a grand mistake to suppose that all the friends of the slave are on one side of this dividing line. They who adopt the new system seem to feel themselves constrained to declare war against other missionary organizations. They hold up to

scorn those societies which God has so signally owned and blessed. They are seeking to alienate the affections of Christians from those societies to whose care they have heretofore entrusted their contributions, and whose officers have evinced great ability and fidelity in using them for the purpose of extending the kingdom of Christ. Now if the precepts of God's word do not imperiously demand of them that they should abandon the societies with which they have been united, is it not a matter of regret they should do it? It is truly affecting that the friends of missions, and that too in their missionary capacity, should be placed in hostile array one against the other.

Some may, peradventure, imagine that the division in the missionary ranks which is caused by this subject, is not between the friends of Christ or the friends of the heathen. I cannot, however, but believe that there are on both sides of this controversy the friends of Christ and the friends of the human race. Ought they not to remain together and work together in the great missionary enterprise? Can it be a harmless thing to throw into opposing squadrons those parts of the army of Israel which belong to the same tribe, and have heretofore pitched by the same standard? We, who are for adhering to the old standard, feel convinced that the inspired records, which relate to the first attempts of the church to evangelize the nations, forbid us to make such alterations in our constitutions as are insisted on by our brethren. Nor have they any good reason to believe it to be a predilection for slavery which holds us back from gratifying their wishes. But because we still adhere to what seems to us to be the *good* as well as the *old* way, some of their number denounce us as being not only the enemies of the slave, but also of Christ. The churches have been warned against the ministers of their own choice as against the most dangerous men—not because they were unsound in doctrine or immoral in their lives—but because of their different manner of treating the subject now before us. And yet this different manner of treating the subject of slavery has implied no complacency in the thing itself, nor any desire for its perpetuation a single day beyond the time when it shall be practicable to effect its abolition without violence. Now I would seriously ask my Christian friends who favor the proposed change in our missionary organizations, whether they do not believe that the result of this change will be unfavorable to the missionary cause, by sowing discord among brethren.

Fourthly. It is in my view a great objection against interweaving the slavery question into a missionary constitution, that its tendency will be not merely to divide missionary societies, but to create a similar division in *Christian churches* all over the land. The church is already broken into so many fragments by denominational differences that in many places it is quite difficult for one denomination to be at the expense of erecting a house of worship and supporting the gospel ministry. And besides sustaining the gospel at home, very much is needed for the extension of its privileges to the destitute settlements in our own land, and to the heathen in foreign lands. We ought, therefore, most earnestly to deprecate any additional subdivisions as an evil of great magnitude, unless they shall be urgently called for. Now, if the slavery question is once made a test for membership in a missionary association, it will soon be made a test for membership in the churches. But why should this thing be made a test for membership? It was not so in the churches formed by the Apostles. In those churches were found masters and servants; and yet it made no schism. Why then should this matter be the cause of division among the churches of our country, and especially of this northern portion of it? Here are no slaveholders; nor do any of us express a desire to possess a slave. But even here, this very matter bids fair to interrupt our fellowship and break us asunder. But why should you be alienated from your brother, so as to break fellowship with him, merely because he feels himself bound by the word of God to bear with his brethren whose minds on this subject have not been made as much enlightened as his own?

I cannot but think that those divisions in the churches, which shall be the fruit of different sentiments on this subject, will be very disastrous to the cause of religion wherever they shall take place. They will doubtless be very gratifying to that grand adversary of the church who walketh about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. We know that he is always seeking to get some advantage of us. Nor are we altogether ignorant of the devices by which he is seeking to get some advantage at the present crisis.

My prayer is, that the friends of the Redeemer may so seasonably become apprised of the wicked design of their adversary, and so vigilantly guard against its success, as to frustrate this attempt of his to divide the churches of our land.

Fifthly. The tendency of making this a dividing line between the friends of missions, and also (as its legitimate consequence) between the members of the churches, will ultimately be, to cast into the shade all other tests of Christian character. Its tendency will be to make us leave out of sight an orthodox faith, an experimental acquaintance with the Gospel, a meek and quiet spirit, and a godly and upright life. A man may have all these in an eminent degree, and yet be esteemed utterly unmeet for a member of a Missionary Society or a Christian Church. On the other hand, he may be destitute of these, and yet be received as a meet member: for whenever that is made a test of Christian character which is not made so by the Word of God, it will be a wonder if it does not exert an influence, like that of Gideon's illegitimate son, to destroy those tests which have the authority of God himself. If the candidate for membership is found to be orthodox on this one point, whatever it may be, that we make our party-badge, we shall be apt to sit down satisfied, without proceeding to examine him on points of supreme importance to the cause of truth and holiness. There is already a unionism in the land which does not consist in an agreement relative to holy doctrines or holy practice: for it manifests great indifference to the most fundamental doctrines, and to some of the most important duties of our holy religion. It need not seem strange if a unionism of this kind should propose some *shibboleth* of its own, by the distinct or indistinct pronunciation of which it shall receive or reject applicants for admission into the communion of the Church.

I am aware that the ground which I have taken in speaking on this subject, may bring on me the odium of being a pro-slavery minister. But I can assure my readers that I have no interest in the perpetuity of slavery; but in the perpetuity and extension of the kingdom of Christ—in the evangelizing of the nations—in the Christianizing of this fallen world (the enslaved among the rest), I have much interest. And did I believe it was the Scriptural way of doing the work—the way most pleasing to Christ our king—that his church should perform her missionary operations with such an explicit declaration of her opposition to slavery, as thereby to identify herself with the Anti-Slavery Societies, I would not dare throw a straw in the way of a reorganization of her Missionary Boards. If this be the way marked out by her Divine Head, to effect the more speedy

recovery of this revolted world, let it find favor in the eyes of all Zion's friends. But since I am convinced that the new way, the way now proposed and entered on by some of our brethren, is not "a more excellent way" (though many doubtless believe it to be so), I have felt myself constrained to show my fellow Christians why I believe the old way to be the best.

As I have advanced beyond the three score years and ten, and am now just finishing the fiftieth year of my ministry, I know the time of my departure must be at hand. I am, therefore, admonished that whatever I have to do for the cause of Christ must be done quickly. My place in the ministry and in the church of Christ will soon be vacated; but the Christian ministry and the Christian church will continue as long as the sun. Nor have I a right to feel an indifference concerning what shall be the character and condition of the church when I shall be sleeping in the dust. Whether it shall be advancing in knowledge and holy union, or be sinking down into an apathy concerning gospel truth, and be more than ever split up into parties, cannot appear a matter of small importance. They who have long been praying that the earth may be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the sea is filled with waters, must exceedingly desire to have the work of evangelizing the nations advance with greater rapidity than it has ever yet done.

It has been no object of this communication to impugn the motives or impeach the character of the brother whose Address has drawn forth my remarks. I have already expressed my approbation of the spirit he manifested in giving liberty to his bondmen; and I hope I rejoice in all the Scriptural efforts which he has made to induce others to imitate his example. But I verily believe that, in the efforts which he is now making, not only to alienate the public mind from the Missionary Board in whose service he once labored, but to involve all the missionary societies with the slave question, he is doing that which is adapted to hinder the cause which I hope he loves. My reasons for believing thus, I have now stated; and I ask that they may be carefully weighed in the balance of the sanctuary. Brethren, consider what I have said, and may the Lord give us understanding in all things. We who are now upon the stage of life are called to act our part in troublous times. But even in such times, it is predicted that the walls of God's city shall be built. Jerusalem is, by its very name, a

city of peace, and such it ought to be in fact. If it has war, it should be from invasion, and not from her own citizens. We are required to pray for the peace of Jerusalem, accompanied with an assurance that they shall prosper who love her.

Let us not forget, brethren, that the Jerusalem that is above, which is the mother of us all, is a spiritual and not a political city. If we are her legitimate offspring, we are born of the Spirit and are spiritual men. And the more spiritual we are in our tempers, in our intercourse with each other, and in all our pursuits in this present evil world, the more shall we do to preserve the peace and promote the prosperity of the city of our God. Should worldly politics at any time disturb the peace of our city, it behooves us as officers and members of the church to avoid angry strife, remembering that we are brethren. Let us freely concede to others that right of private judgment which we claim for ourselves.

There may be obstructions in the way of the world's conversion, which God has not placed directly within the power of his church to remove. Now, if there be other, and perhaps greater obstructions which are within her power, here let her zeal and efforts be concentrated. Error in material points of doctrine—the restraining of prayer in the secret chamber, at the family altar, and at the prayer meetings, if not in the sanctuary itself—the profanation of the holy Sabbath—the neglect of church discipline, and the religious training of children—indifference concerning revivals of religion, or concerning their character—a spirit of covetousness holding us back from providing the requisite means for the spread of the gospel—these, and other things of this nature, constitute a formidable obstruction to the conversion of souls at home and abroad. And these obstructions, let it be remembered, are fully within the sphere of operation belonging to that kingdom which is not of this world. Were all the subjects of this spiritual kingdom, both ministers and private brethren, to be united, heart and hand, in removing these obstructions, is there not reason to believe the Lord would give them success? And would not union in these spiritual efforts do more than anything else to pave the way for the removal of those obstructions which now lie beyond their reach?

Brethren, consider what I have said, and may the Lord give us understanding in all things.